

# The American Conservative

## IRAQ FOLLY

**How Victory  
Could Spell  
American Defeat**

By Eric S. Margolis



SAUDI ARABIA

IRAQ

IRAN

- Brimelow on Malkin
- Sailer on Neil Young
- Buchanan on Empire



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# We Take Our Stand

TODAY THE UNITED STATES has no shortage of magazines that would call their orientation, and be described by others as, "conservative." Add the conservative dominance of talk radio, the popularity of several talented right-of-center television commentators, the current Republican majority

in the House, and the Bush presidency, and one could argue that conservative ideas have as much resonance as they have ever had.

And yet there is a great, often unarticulated discomfort in the ranks of many who considered themselves conservative during the past few decades. A friend of ours recently told of an encounter with one of his academic colleagues. "You're a conservative," the colleague said—"so you must agree with Paul Wolfowitz that we should attack Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and all those places."

Well, no. Not all conservatives do agree that the United States should engage—for reasons that hardly touch America's own vital interests—in an open-ended war against much of the Arab and Muslim world.

A variant of that conversation might be had about immigration—an issue around which genuine debate erupted for a brief time in the mid-1990s—only to be extinguished by the regnant factions of the conservative establishment. "So you're a conservative" that conversation would run. "You must believe that 'There shall be open borders'" as the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page habitually puts it.

Well, again, no. We believe that America has gained and still does from new immigrants. But, after two decades of intense immigration, we also believe that the nation needs a slowdown to assimilate those already here.

We are told—by some of the more powerful voices on the Right—that these debates are over. Neoconservatism, that influential and in many ways admirable tendency that emerged during the 1970s and flowered during the 1980s, has triumphed. It is now the dominant, nay, the only American conservatism worth talking about.

And if you look at the array of conservative media outlets, that would almost seem to be the case. The major magazines now compete over which can bray

loudest for the widest war, the most ambitious expansion of an American imperium. More discretely, they vie to articulate their relief that the shock of 9/11 has not, as yet, translated into a decisive political push for serious immigration reform.

We will be different.

Many voices will appear in the pages of *The American Conservative*—often in disagreement with one another. We are of course in considerable part Buchananite—well disposed to the web of ideas that drew millions of voters during three Buchanan presidential bids. But our mission is broader: to reignite the conversation that conservatives ought to have engaged in since the end of the Cold War, but didn't.

We will question the benefits and point to the pitfalls of the global free trade economy; we will free the immigration debate from the prison to which it has been consigned. And we will discuss, frequently, America's role in the world, turning a critical eye on those who want to cast aside every relevant American foreign policy tradition—from Robert Taft-style isolationism to prudent Dwight Eisenhower-style internationalism, in favor of go-it-alone militarism, where America threatens and bombs one nation after another, while the world looks on in increasing horror.

We believe conservatism to be the most natural political tendency, rooted in man's taste for the familiar, for family, for faith in God. We believe that true conservatism has a predisposition for the institutions and mores that exist. So much of what passes for contemporary conservatism is wedded to a kind of radicalism—fantasies of global hegemony, the hubristic notion of America as a universal nation for all the world's peoples, a hyperglobal economy. In combination with an increasingly unveiled contempt for America's long-standing allies, it is more a recipe for disaster.

Against it, we take our stand.

—The Editors

[MEDIA]

## LET'S INVADE CHILE NEXT!

*National Review* editor Rich Lowry recently provided a novel justification for invading Iraq: Saddam Hussein is a *fascist*! In a recent column the young editor of the venerable journal laid it out: "Saddam's militaristic, one-party ideology bears a strong resemblance and has direct intellectual connections to fascism... So Saddam is less Che Guevara (a romantic, anti-colonial figure) and more Augusto Pinochet."

Except we remember when Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean authoritarian ruler who ousted Salvador Allende's Marxist government in a bloody 1973 coup, was defended and appreciated by *National Review*—because, among other things, right wing authoritarian governments tended to evolve into democracies, (Chile, Spain, Portugal, Korea, Taiwan, etc....) and more importantly because *they were on our side* in the great struggle of the era, against communism.

Perhaps most of those who now work for the magazine have little recollection of or interest in such arguments and wisdom from the past. (Who was James Burnham anyway?) But someone should.

[GUILT]

## SORRY WHITE FOLK

On August 22, the *Philadelphia Daily News* tried to do a good deed for the community. The paper printed the mugshots of 15 suspects wanted for murder, hoping to facilitate their arrests. It worked; one man hiding in North Carolina turned himself in, and police apprehended another on a tip. For its trouble, however, the paper earned not praise but scorn. All of the photos it had run were of minorities. That none of the 41 murder suspects identified by the police was white did not stop race hucksters from demand-



ing the editors' resignations. The editors kept their jobs, but not without groveling, including an Orwellian apology by a *Daily News* editor for printing the "literal truth." Stating what should be obvious, Hiawatha Bray, a black reporter from Boston, summed it up: "No newspaper editor has any business apologizing for writing truthfully about an issue of obvious public concern just because it upsets some members of the public. Get a grip, you guys."

[IMMIGRATION]

## TAN MEXICANO COMO GRINGO

"As Mexican as American": that's how publicist Leonel Sosa glowingly described Tony Garza to the Mexico City daily *Reforma* after President Bush nominated his Texas political ally as ambassador to Mexico. Garza's Senate confirmation hearing on September 5th shows Sosa's confidence isn't misplaced. Garza endorsed an immigration deal that ensures an "orderly, secured and legal" influx of

Mexicans "tied to our labor needs" (as defined by employers, not Americans without jobs). While denying support for amnesty, Garza said we need "some sort of earned legalization ... that allows the path to citizenship." He's right—that's no mere amnesty. It's giving away U.S. citizenship to people who break into our country. Who will Tony Garza, the grandson of Mexican immigrants, represent in Mexico City: Americans or a Mexico pushing for open borders? His confirmation performance suggests the answer, and maybe it's significant that his featured picture on [tonygarza.com](http://tonygarza.com) shows him shaking Vicente Fox's hand. Let Bush reward his friend by sending him somewhere else. Why ask for divided loyalty in those who are appointed to advance America's interests? Not for the first time, George W. Bush is His-pandering at the nation's expense.

—Howard Sutherland

[ECONOMICS]

## THE CHINA FANTASY (CON'T.)

The marks are in for China's progress toward fair trade since its U.S.-chaperoned admission to the WTO. Apparently the promise of wide open markets was just that—a promise. According to the Chamber of Commerce, which gleefully championed the PRC's bid, "It's too early to issue sweeping judgments." But their new report runs short on gold stars. Agriculture: delay tactics, export subsidies, and various schemes to keep the Chinese market closed to foreign goods. Intellectual property: "rampant" violations. Services: Insurance and commercial banking still closed to foreign investment. Seems our "strategic partner" is slow to convert to the free trade faith—or perhaps just prefers its end of the \$84 billion U.S.-China trade imbalance.

[CULTURE]

## THE STORK CAN BRING THEM

Hollywood is all for maximum freedom of speech but thinks some messages are a little too much for tender suburbanite sensibilities. Like the ad campaign by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. The ASRM ads were designed to inform people in their 20s and 30s that their near term decisions may have long term consequences, like infertility. The ads targeted smoking, obesity, STD's, and of course that inescapable fact that fertility belongs mostly to the young. One ad evoked the biological clock: a baby bottle shaped like an hourglass.

In an impressive display of unity, some of the nation's premier cultural guardians closed ranks. Movie theater chains AMC Entertainment Inc., Loews Cineplex, Century Theatres, and many shopping malls refused the ads. A spokesman Viacom Outdoor explained that mall managements prefer "mall friendly" and "happy environment" graphics.

Commented Dr. Michael Soules, of the University of Washington, "Apparently gratuitous violence and sexually provocative advertising are okay but talking about a public health issue that affects 6.2 million American men and women is not."

[CONGRESS]

## A FEW PRUDENT MEN

Outgoing House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.) made waves last August when he said he opposed a war with Iraq. Republican Senators Dick Lugar (Ind.), Chuck Hagel (Neb.) and Larry Craig (Idaho) soon joined in with varying degrees of skepticism. While the loudest, those four are not alone among Capitol Hill conservatives.

Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), also a

conservative, said he was duped when he got behind the Iraq war a decade ago. Duncan says Iraqi military might was exaggerated then. "Let us not exaggerate [Hussein's] strength this time," Duncan asked on the House floor June 5. "If he starts to attack us, I will be the first to support a war effort, but please let us not provoke war."

The most principled conservative in Congress is also the most purely libertarian and anti-war member: Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.). Paul understands the warfare state as an extension of the welfare state and rejects publicly the claim that attacking Iraq would make us safer.

While no conservative, Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) is a staunchly pro-life Catholic with a passion for human rights. Smith fears a war with Iraq would yield little gain at great cost of innocent Iraqi life. Favoring removal of the dictator Hussein, Smith believes there may be a way to depose him without spilling so much blood. Staffers indicate he would get fully behind the President if Bush presented a detailed plan showing how to quickly and cleanly do the job.

While others, including International Affairs Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) have voiced doubts, Hill staffers speculate that most of the doubting right-wingers are looking for an excuse to jump into line with the War Party once the President really snaps his fingers.

—Timothy Carney

*The American Conservative* welcomes letters to the editor. Submit letters by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

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# After the War

**“Though the object of being a Great Power is to be able to fight a Great War, the only way of remaining a**

Great Power is not to fight one.” So wrote British historian A.J.P. Taylor in 1961.

All the 20th century empires forgot the lesson and all perished of wounds suffered in Great Wars: the Ottoman, Russian Austro-Hungarian, and German empires in World War I, the Japanese in World War II, the French and British the morning after.

Comes now the turn of the Americans. Guided through the Cold War by conservative statesmen like Eisenhower and Reagan, America rejected Churchillian romanticism and, even in the face of horrors like the butchery in Budapest in 1956, refused to risk the Great War. But now a triumphalist America has begun to behave like all the rest.

If Providence does not intrude, we will soon launch an imperial war on Iraq with all the “On-to-Berlin!” bravado with which French *poilus* and British Tommies marched in August 1914. But this invasion will not be the cakewalk neoconservatives predict. More likely, it will be the “bloody mess” of which Tony Cordesman warns.

Yet America will not be defeated by an Arab pariah state with an obsolete air force, a dozen 400-mile missiles, a population a tenth of ours, an economy 1% of ours, and neither satellites nor smart bombs.

Indeed, all 22 Arab nations have a total GDP smaller than Spain’s. None can defeat us, and any that resorts to a weapon of mass destruction invites annihilation. And before any hostile Arab or Islamic regime can acquire an atomic weapon, the War Party wants

to exploit this window of opportunity to smash them all.

But what comes after the celebratory gunfire when wicked Saddam is dead? Initially, the President and War Party will be seen as vindicated by victory and exhilarated by their new opportunity. For Iraq is key to the Middle East. With Iraq occupied, Syria will be hemmed in by Israeli, American, and Turkish power. Assad will have to pull his army out of Lebanon, so Sharon can go back in and settle scores with Hezbollah. Iran will be surrounded by U.S. power in Turkey, Iraq, the Gulf, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Arabian Sea.

This is the vision that intoxicates the neoconservatives who pine for a “World War IV”—a cakewalk conquest of Iraq followed by short sharp wars on Syria and Iran. Already Israel is tugging at our sleeve, reminding us not to forget Libya.

What is wrong with this vision? Only this: Just as Israel’s invasion of Lebanon ignited a guerrilla war that drove her bloodied army out after 18 years, a U.S. army in Baghdad will ignite calls for *jihād* from Morocco to Malaysia.

Pro-American regimes will be seen as impotent to prevent U.S. hegemony over the Islamic world. And just as monarchs who collaborated with Europe’s colonial powers were dethroned by nationalists in Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Tripoli, Teheran and Addis Ababa, pro-American autocrats will be targeted by assassins.

A burst of gunfire could convert Jordan, Afghanistan, or nuclear-armed Pakistan into an enemy overnight.

And with Israelis generals blabbing about pre-positioned U.S. weapons and Bibi Netanyahu listing for Congressional committees all the Arab nations we must attack, Al Jazeera does not need shoe-leather reporting to let Islam know on whose behalf America has come to crush their armies and occupy their capitals.

Once in Baghdad, how do we get out? If the Kurds rebel to create a nation, will U.S. troops help Turks crush them? If the House of Saud falls, will it be succeeded by social democrats or Bin Laden’s fanatics?

To destroy Saddam’s weapons, to democratize, defend, and hold Iraq together, U.S. troops will be tied down for decades. Yet, terrorist attacks in liberated Iraq seem as certain as in liberated Afghanistan. For a militant Islam that holds in thrall scores of millions of true believers will never accept George Bush dictating the destiny of the Islamic world.

With our MacArthur Regency in Baghdad, Pax Americana will reach apogee. But then the tide recedes, for the one endeavor at which Islamic peoples excel is expelling imperial powers by terror and guerrilla war. They drove the Brits out of Palestine and Aden, the French out of Algeria, the Russians out of Afghanistan, the Americans out of Somalia and Beirut, the Israelis out of Lebanon.

Twelve years ago, this writer predicted that George Bush’s Gulf War would be “the first Arab-American War.” The coming war will not be the last. We have started up the road to empire and over the next hill we will meet those who went before. The only lesson we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. ■

[no u-turns allowed]

# Now Entering Imperium

The Old Right knew something about the temptations of Empire—and that “there is no security at the top of the world.” **By Justin Raimondo**

JUST AS GULF War I was a watershed issue for conservatives—with some, notably Pat Buchanan, dissenting, on the grounds that the throne of Kuwait “is not worth the life of a single American soldier”—Gulf War II is shaping up as yet another defining moment in the history of the American Right. Only this time, it isn’t just about Iraq. The whole of the Middle East is in our sights—that is, if we take seriously the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Advisory Board (DPAB), chaired by neoconservative foreign policy guru Richard Perle.

DPAB’s infamous “briefing” that called for an American invasion of Saudi Arabia and the seizure of the oil fields shook U.S.-Saudi relations and elicited fierce denials from the White House and expressions of horror from Riyadh. Rand Corporation analyst Laurent Murawiec, in his Power Point presentation to an assembly that included Henry Kissinger, former defense secretaries Harold Brown and James Schlesinger, Newt Gingrich, Thomas Foley, and a number of retired high-level generals and admirals, exhorted his audience to embark on a campaign of outright conquest:

“Iraq is the tactical pivot—Saudi Arabia the strategic pivot—Egypt the prize.”

One has to ask: are these people crazy?

In Murawiec’s case, the manic tone may be attributed to his previous membership in the cult of Lyndon LaRouche from 1973–86. But there’s more to it than that.

According to the *Washington Post*’s account of the reaction to the briefing, of all that distinguished company only Kissinger had the presence of mind to raise any objections. That such a lunatic idea could be casually bandied about and even endorsed by some in this administration is ominous evidence that U.S. foreign policy is in danger of becoming dangerously unhinged.

That such a radical idea could be propagated by ostensible conservatives shows how far the divisions that opened up during Gulf War I have widened. In his syndicated newspaper column for November 16, 1990, Pat Buchanan summarized the credo of those on the Right who weren’t going along with King George’s “New World Order”:

“Most of us ‘neo-isolationists,’ a disparate, contentious lot, are really not ‘neo’ anything. We are old church and old right, anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist, disbelievers in Pax Americana. We love the old republic,

and when we hear phrases like ‘New World Order,’ we release the safety catches on our revolvers.”

The “old right”—who and what was that?

Today, a popular misconception of conservatives equates them with militarists: the Cold War and the belligerent yapping of such journals of conservative opinion as the *Weekly Standard* and *National Review* have certainly contributed to this image. But it wasn’t always so.

The conservative movement of the 1930s, on up through the early 1950s, was, as Buchanan puts it, anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist. The biggest peace movement in our history was not the Mobilization to Stop the (Vietnam) War, but the America First Committee, organized by prominent conservative businessmen and publicists in 1940. Writing in the conservative press of the time, such writers as John T. Flynn, Frank Chodorov, *Chicago Tribune* publisher Robert W. McCormick, and Garet Garrett inveighed against foreign entanglements and warned that with war would come the end of the Old Republic. On the subject of the Old Right, today’s (neo)conservatives and their liberal first cousins are in complete agreement: both dismiss the America Firsters out of hand, usually smearing them in the process. In any case, the Left-Right consensus seems to be that

TODAY, A POPULAR MISCONCEPTION OF CONSERVATIVES EQUATES THEM WITH MILITARISTS....BUT IT WASN'T ALWAYS SO.

the Old Right is, at best, irrelevant, and that the forgotten icons of a bygone era have nothing to say to us today.

These people are obviously unfamiliar with the works of Garet Garrett, chief editorial writer for the *Saturday Evening Post* until the war broke out, and an author of note, whose pellucid prose could be published today and be none the worse for wear. In reading about the Napoleonic designs of the Defense Policy Board, I could only recall these words written by Garrett at the end of his last book, *The American Story*, published in 1955:

"How now, thou American, frustrated crusader, do you know where you are?

"Is it security you want? There is no security at the top of the world.

"To thine own self a liberator, to the world an alarming portent, do you know where you are going from here?"

Garrett's prophecies ring down through the years, leaping off the yellowed pages of dusty books, mocking us with their accuracy and astonishing us with their modernity:

"We have crossed the boundary that lies between Republic and Empire. If you ask when, the answer is that you cannot make a single stroke between day and night; the precise moment does not matter. There was no painted sign to say" 'You are now entering Imperium.' Yet it was a very old road and the voice of history was saying: 'Whether you know it or not, the act of crossing may be irreversible.' And now, not far ahead, is a sign that reads: 'No U-turns.'"

The occupation of Iraq, a war to sub-

due Egypt, the conquest of the Kingdom we once sought to "defend" against Saddam—these war plans are the equivalent of a very large sign with flashing letters: "You are now entering Imperium." And, yes, a little further up the road is another sign: "No U-turns." If it should come to pass that, one day, historians of the far future seek to pinpoint the precise moment when our old Republic morphed into an Empire, then a good many of them

will argue that Gulf War II was the turning point.

We are, indeed, at the top of the world. Like Garrett, the conservative of today who has learned the lesson of history can only note that it's a long way down. ■

*Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com and author of An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.*

[letter from london]

# You're on your own, Yanks

America's duty is to pursue justice ruthlessly, not to make a burnt offering of innocent Arabs. **By Stuart Reid**

LONDON—SENTIMENTAL warmongers love to invoke the Blitz. Last September Tony Blair declared that Britain stood "shoulder to shoulder" with America. It was the right thing to do, he said, not least because America had been the "one nation" that "above all" had stood by Britain during the Blitz. In fact, America was (apart from the Irish Republic) the only English-speaking nation that did *not* stand by us. The Canadians stood by us. So did the Australians, the New Zealanders, the South Africans and the good folks of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Lend-lease notwithstanding, the United States was neutral. In June 1940, 86 percent of Americans said they did not

want to go to war with Germany. And who can blame them? Hitler was a menace to Europe, but not to the United States.

In Britain today, a majority of those polled say they do not want the U.K. to be the "one nation" that stands "shoulder to shoulder" with the U.S. in a war against Iraq. Who can blame them? Saddam does not threaten the United Kingdom. Nor, for that matter, does he threaten the United States. Indeed, it is hard to see how he threatens anyone but himself. So what they want to know in the souks and the shopping malls is: why should George W. Bush be so determined to bully and cajole the UN into making war with Iraq



inevitable? Maybe my friends the conspiracy nuts are right; maybe Mr. Bush's ultimate purpose is:

1. To stop Andrew Sullivan from throwing another hissy fit.

2. To facilitate regime change and nation-building in Palestine.

3. To make the world safe for corporate America by securing the oil fields of the Arabian peninsula and—through a never-ending war against terrorism—of Central Asia.

America's frustrated need for revenge also plays a part, of course, though the first war of revenge was a spectacular failure. The Operation Formerly Known as Infinite Justice simply proved what we already knew: that the B-52 is mightier than the sword. The finest British and American forces were deployed in Afghanistan, to no effect. Osama bin Laden was not nabbed, and the al Qaeda network remains more or less intact. The only big winners of the past year have been Afghan opium producers and their agents in the slums of Europe.

Under these circumstances, you'd think that Blair would find it hard to claim the moral high ground and keep a straight face; but you'd be wrong. New Labour is an odd confection. On the one hand it is the party of war and big business (in the 1997 general election, Tony Blair was backed by Margaret Thatcher and Rupert Murdoch); on the other, it is the party of pious left-liberalism. When Tony Blair is not lecturing us on the wickedness of Saddam (which no one disputes), he is talking about the suffering of the Iraqi people and how we have a duty to free them from the yoke of oppression. When Iraqis die, in other words, it will be for their own good.

Outside the ranks of the liberal-left and the hard Right, it is hard to find anyone who supports this line of reasoning. The Old Left (John Pilger, Paul

Foot, Robert Fisk, Tariq Ali) is of course against the war. But the most telling opposition is coming from the Old Right. The *Daily Mail*, the mass circulation voice of the Tory shires, is robustly skeptical about the need to topple Saddam. Some conservatives go further than others in their opposition. When the war hysteria began last year, Michael Wharton (Peter Simple of the *Daily Telegraph* and the most conservative columnist in England) wrote, "The downfall of the twin towers that symbolized the worldwide empire of imaginary money is not in itself a cause of grief." Among other leading conservatives with strong misgivings are Mark Almond (lecturer in modern history at Oriel College, Oxford), the military historian Correlli Barnett, the former Tory foreign secretaries Malcolm Rifkind and Douglas Hurd, and the former *Sunday Telegraph* editor Peregrine Worsthorne.

To their number must be added the ghost of Auberon Waugh, the anarchist son of Evelyn. Mercifully, Bron died a couple of years ago, so we have been spared what would have been an outrageously tasteless response to the events of 9/11. Bron was keen on guns and on killing burglars, but he was not keen on war, least of all for a war with Iraq. In 1998, the last time the U.S. and Britain gave Saddam a serious biffing, he asked: "How can any intelligent person be expected to believe that a country of 15 million people, mostly impoverished desert dwellers, poses a threat to world peace?" He would no doubt have gone along with the view widely held here, that if Saddam really did have weapons of mass destruction, Bush would be looking for another target.

It would be idle to pretend that there is not an element of anti-Americanism in the conservative anti-war movement. Now that communism has collapsed, many Tories are beginning to wonder whether it might not be better for everyone—not least the American taxpayer—if the Yanks went home. Some have even begun to look to Europe as a bulwark against the spread of American ideas, the most insidious of which is Manichaeism. It would be hard to exaggerate the disgust felt here when the U.S. president declared: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." It was a remark that combined stupidity and arrogance in equal measure, and in an instant it alienated hundreds of thousands of people in Britain, and millions around the world.

This is not kneejerk anti-Americanism, at least on my part. I have an American wife, an American son, and a congenital weakness for American culture. I (noisily) supported the war in Vietnam. I wear Gap chinos. But I believe that we Britons have for too long cleaved to the United States of America and ought now, with good grace, cleave instead to the United States of Europe. After all, as many readers of *The American Conservative* will no doubt agree, Chirac and Schroeder talk more sense about the Middle East than Bush and Blair. In their plodding way, Anglo-American neocons—ever at the cutting edge of received wisdom—denounce Europe as a politically correct plot. I say it's time to give PC a chance. ■

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*Stuart Reid is deputy editor of The Spectator.*

NOW THAT COMMUNISM HAS COLLAPSED, MANY TORIES ARE BEGINNING TO WONDER WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT BE BETTER FOR EVERYONE—NOT LEAST THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER—IF THE YANKS WENT HOME.

[day of the armchair warriors]

# *Iraq Invasion: The Road to Folly*

Ignorant of Iraq, void of strategic vision, and viewing the Mideast through the neoconservative prism, Bush steers America toward a quagmire.

**By Eric S. Margolis**

MAJ. GEN. J.F.C. FULLER, Britain's leading military thinker of the 20th century, wrote that the object of war is not victory, but peace. A war that fails to achieve clear political objectives is merely an exercise in violence and futility.

In its headlong rush to invade Iraq, the Bush administration is violating Fuller's simple yet immensely important strategic dictum. Britain's Prime Minister Anthony Eden committed the same grave error in 1956 when he launched an ill-conceived invasion of Egypt which, like modern Iraq, had the audacity to defy a great power. The Suez operation was a military success that turned into a political fiasco.

The Bush administration is clearly obsessed with Iraq, but it has no clear plan on what to do with this Mideast version of ex-Yugoslavia once America's military might overthrows Saddam Hussein's regime. Nor is there understanding of how invasion and

occupation will affect the Fertile Crescent, America's client Arab regimes, Turkey, indeed, the entire Mideast.

There is also the dearth of reliable political information on Iraq from human sources that has long plagued U.S. Mideast policy. Much of the Bush administration's current view of the region has been fashioned by neoconservatives, who hold key policymaking positions in White House, Pentagon, and Vice President's office. Equally significant, the administration's non-electronic human intelligence on the Mideast and terrorism relies heavily on self-serving data supplied by foreign intelligence services and Iraqi exile groups.

The ideologues and Pentagon hawks driving administration policy recall the Roman senator Cato, who ended every oration with, "Carthage must be destroyed!" Few of these armchair warriors have even been to Iraq; less have ever served in U.S. armed

forces, yet all are eager to send American soldiers to fight a potentially bloody war whose benefits to the United States are doubtful.

Lust for destruction is not policy, no matter how much Pentagon hawks and neoconservative media trumpets may yearn to plow salt into the fields of Iraq. Nor is the piratical proposal that the U.S. "liberate" Iraq and plunder its great oil reserves to bring "civilization and democracy" to that benighted nation.

If Washington were truly concerned about democracy and human rights in the Arab world, it could long ago have promoted democracy in the military dictatorships and feudal sheikdoms over which the U.S. exercises paramount influence: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf emirates. Instead, under the banner of a war on terrorism, the U.S. has been buttressing autocracy and despotism, most recently in Central Asia and Pakistan.



MARK BREWER

The first question, of course, is why should the U.S. attack Iraq, a nation that has not committed any act of war against America? The rest of the world will rightly see such an act as naked aggression, a return to British- and Soviet-style imperialism, and a personal vendetta by George Bush against Saddam Hussein.

According to President Bush, Iraq must be destroyed because Saddam Hussein might possess some hidden chemical or biological weapons (WMDs), or because Iraq might one day develop nuclear weapons, or might slip WMDs to anti-American terrorists, or simply because he is "evil." The Bush administration's insistence on the right to intervene preemptively anywhere on earth recalls the old Brezhnev Doctrine of Soviet days.

Why Iraq alone is a danger among the 18 nations that possess weapons of mass destruction—including India whose new ICBM's will be able to deliver

nuclear weapons to the U.S.—remains a mystery. Why Saddam's ravaged, hermetically bottled up Iraq would be more of a danger to the U.S. than 1.5 billion Muslims enraged by America's perceived persecution of Iraqis, Afghans, and Palestinians also remains unclear. Terrorists don't need Iraq to concoct germ weapons, as Japan's Aum Shin-rikyo showed, and Saddam Hussein is too intelligent to invite nuclear attack by the United States or Israel by slipping germ weapons to terrorists. If Saddam had wanted to do so, he had ample opportunity from 1991-2001.

Equally unclear is why the U.S. refuses to seek diplomatic accommodation with Iraq rather than war. Saddam Hussein has repeatedly shown himself a wily survivor willing to deal with the devil, when necessary. The United States was a close ally, financial backer, and provider of arms and intelligence to Saddam in the 1980s. He is certainly not eager to face an

American invasion that would bring his own demise, and would therefore welcome a diplomatic escape from the dire fate he faces.

Just before the 1991 Gulf War, this writer discovered a group of British scientific technicians in Baghdad who had been "seconded" to Iraq by the British Ministry of Defense and the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, to help Baghdad develop biological weapons. The British technicians were based at the secret biowarfare complex at Salman Pak where they were developing anthrax, botulism and possibly Q-fever for Saddam's military—with the full knowledge and support of the British and American governments. Other British scientists were developing poison gas for Iraq. They showed me documents confirming that the feeder stocks for Iraq's germ weapons had been supplied by the United States.

In other words, it was fine for Iraq



# Iraq Folly

to shower poison gas—and potentially germs—on Muslim Iranians and Kurdish rebels during the Iran-Iraq War. But once Iraq invaded Kuwait, a protectorate inherited by the U.S. from the British Empire, and once Israel felt threatened by Saddam's WMDs, then it was time to destroy Iraq. But Iraq did not use its WMD arsenal during Gulf War I, though U.S. troop concentrations at crowded Saudi ports would have made ideal targets.

No matter, answer administration critics, Saddam might have some gas or germ weapons hidden away. Yes, he might. But as former UN arms inspector Scott Ritter has observed, all leftover WMDs from the 1980s have a shelflife of only 3–5 years and are no longer lethal. Iraq may have developed a few toxins since then, but it has no delivery systems for these complex, unstable, clumsy weapons. Britain, France, Israel, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Libya, India and Pakistan, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, China, Taiwan—and Cuba—also have chemical weapons; some have biological weapons. Castro's are only 90 miles from Miami.

Then there is North Korea. Amidst cries for war against Iraq, it's fascinating to consider Stalinist North Korea, a nation that, unlike Iraq, well and truly threatens Americans. The 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea are within range of North Korea's huge numbers of heavy guns, rocket batteries, and Scud missiles that can deliver tons of poison gas and biowarfare toxins. U.S. bases in South Korea, Japan, and Okinawa are prime targets for North Korean WMDs and attacks by its 100,000-man commando force, the world's largest. North Korea has at least two nuclear devices and has repeatedly threatened to "burn" Seoul and "slaughter" American troops in South Korea. The North continues to work on an ICBM capable of reaching

Japan and the U.S. mainland.

Surely on the scale of threats to Americans, aggressive, sinister, and wholly unpredictable North Korea should demand more urgent attention than demolished Iraq? On the contrary, both

**SURELY ON THE SCALE OF THREATS TO AMERICANS, AGGRESSIVE, SINISTER, AND WHOLLY UNPREDICTABLE NORTH KOREA SHOULD DEMAND MORE URGENT ATTENTION THAN DEMOLISHED IRAQ.**

the Clinton and Bush administrations chose to negotiate with Pyongyang and bribe it to be good with \$4.6 billion worth of light water nuclear reactors, oil, food, and cash. American aid feeds starving North Koreans while the U.S. denies Iraq chlorine to purify its contaminated drinking water, the main cause of death for hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children.

Why indulge North Korea while scourging Iraq? First, oil. Iraq's oil reserves are second only to those of Saudi Arabia. Considering that the Bush Administration has embarked on a long-term campaign militarily to dominate and exploit the oil of Central Asia's Caspian Basin, it is not a stretch to believe that control of the more proximate oil of Iraq is also high on the administration's petro-agenda.

Second, Iraq, unlike North Korea, poses a potential threat to Israel's regional hegemony and Mideast nuclear monopoly because of its oil wealth and—at least until 1991—industrial base. For administration hawks who view the Mideast mainly through the lens of Israel's strategic needs, crushing Iraq is a high priority. A shattered Iraq, divided into Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia regions, would permanently terminate any future challenge to Israel.

Iraq's northern oil fields could then be annexed by Israel's new strategic ally, Turkey, which has no oil. Turkey's

generals have long eyed Iraq's oil-rich Mosul and Kirkuk regions, once part of the Ottoman Empire. Oil would transform Turkey from a financial cripple into a major political and military power, and assure its role as

America's regional gendarme.

Overthrowing Saddam Hussein and splintering Iraq would certainly be beneficial for Israel, but there are a host of arguments to be made why such aggression would be inimical to America's interests. First and foremost, the substantial loss of American lives, unless there is a surprise coup against Saddam, in what inevitably would be a conflict fought out in urban areas where U.S. firepower and technology would be attenuated.

During the 1973 war, the crack Israeli army was forced to withdraw from Suez City in the face of stubborn resistance from dug-in Egyptian troops and irregulars. Though U.S. forces could quickly defeat Iraq's regular army in the field, there is a high risk of prolonged urban guerilla warfare and great numbers of civilian casualties.

If Saddam does have any active chemical or biological weapons hidden away, he might well use them against American troops concentrated in the Gulf, unlike 1991. A cornered Saddam facing death might fire a few Scud missiles with chemical warheads at Israel in a Mideast Gotterdammerung. Israel warns it will retaliate with nuclear weapons if Iraq attacks with WMDs.

Virtually the entire world is against an invasion of Iraq, save only Israel and Britain, and Tony Blair's Labour Party is

deeply split over the issue. Waves of anti-Americanism would intensify across the Muslim world, jeopardizing American diplomats, businessmen, and tourists. The costs of an invasion of Iraq using at least 100,000 troops would begin at \$75 billion and soar from there. Reserves will have to be mobilized.

This huge cost, born entirely by American taxpayers, would come just as the Bush administration has created a yawning deficit that will inevitably trigger rising inflation. The faux war in Afghanistan, where some 12,000 U.S. troops are chasing shadows, is costing \$5 billion each month. The U.S.-installed Karzai regime rules only Kabul, and that only with the bayonets of western troops.

But the most important practical reason not to attack Iraq comes from General Fuller. What will the U.S. do with this Mideast Yugoslavia once it conquers Iraq?

Consider Iraq's bloody history: Britain created Iraq after World War I to acquire its oil, and put a puppet king, Faisal I, on the throne. Iraqis and Kurds rebelled in 1920 and were crushed by British troops and bombers. Iraq's second king, Gazi, vowed to "liberate" Kuwait and died mysteriously soon after, murdered, Iraqis say, by British intelligence.

Faisal II, another British puppet, was overthrown in a 1958 military coup by Col. Kassem. The Kurds rebelled again. Kassem massed troops to invade Kuwait but was stopped by British forces, then murdered in a military coup led by Col. Aref. Two years later, Saddam Hussein seized power. The Kurds rebelled once more, aided by the U.S., Israel, and Iran. In 1979, the U.S. and Britain armed and financed Saddam to invade Iran and overthrow its Islamic regime. In 1990, Washington gave Saddam what he took as a green light to invade Kuwait.

This unstable "Pandora's Box" is the nation the U.S. plans to rule. When Saddam falls, Iraq will almost certainly splinter. This is the very reason why Bush *père* wisely decided against marching on Baghdad in 1991. President Bush Sr. and his Arab allies concluded Iran would annex southern Iraq. The only leader who could hold the nation together was the iron-fisted Saddam.

A gelded, isolated Saddam is far less of a danger than a geopolitical maelstrom in Iraq that might force U.S. troops to put down Kurdish rebels seeking their own state, or battle Shias, Iraq's religious majority. War in Iraq may spark an anti-western revolution in Turkey or reignite the Kurdish uprising there. Will the Arab world explode, as Egypt warns?

What about Iran? The same rationale advanced by neoconservatives to invade Iraq also applies to Iran, a nation of 68 million and a greater challenge to Israel than Iraq. Will the U.S. face a lengthy guerilla war in the cities of Iraq or the lush valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, where the British were defeated by the Turks in 1916. The cost of permanently garrisoning Iraq will strain America's already overstretched armed forces and make them less effective in responding to a genuine threat elsewhere, notably the Korean Peninsula.

The squabbling Iraqi opposition groups cultivated by the United States are sneered at even by their American paymasters, discredited because of their links to Israel, and most unlikely to form a stable regime. Whatever Iraqi general the U.S. puts in power in Baghdad will, like all his predecessors, battle the rebellious Kurds, yearn to annex Kuwait, and inevitably seek nuclear weapons to counter Israel's nuclear arsenal and Iran's advantage in manpower. Iraq will be Iraq, no matter who rules. The best way to end the Mideast's WMD arms race is to impose

regional disarmament. This includes Israel, which continues to refuse nuclear arms inspection.

However brutal and aggressive, Saddam Hussein has also been Iraq's most effective ruler since 1957. It was Saddam who transformed Iraq into a modern, industrialized nation with one of the Arab world's highest standards of education and income. Washington could yet rue the day it failed to keep this Arab Stalin in power.

America may seize and exploit Iraq's oil in the short term, as neo-imperialists in Washington are urging, but in the long run, the cost of protecting oil installations and a puppet regime in Baghdad will exceed profits gained from pumping stolen oil. Bush is wrong if he thinks Iraq can be turned into another docile American protectorate, like Kuwait or Bahrain.

The Muslim world increasingly views George Bush's America as set on a crusade against Muslims everywhere, a view reinforced by U.S. attacks on Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan over past two decades.

There is simply no political benefit for the United States in invading Iraq.

On the contrary, such an act of brazen aggression would summon up a host of unforeseen dangers and unimagined consequences that could destabilize the Mideast and Turkey, create a world economic crisis, and, perhaps, cause the aggressive Bush administration to commit an act of imperial overreach that permanently injures America's geopolitical interests and, let us not forget, its moral integrity. ■

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*Eric S. Margolis is author of War at the Top of the World—The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia (Routledge, New York, 2002) and Contributing Foreign Editor of Sun Media. He has covered Iraq since the 1970s.*

[our gilded age]

# Why I Am No Longer a Conservative

The man who plotted Nixon's path to victory wonders what conservatism has wrought.

By Kevin Phillips

MUCH IDEOLOGICAL water has flowed under the bridge since I began writing *The Emerging Republican Majority* in the wake of the 1966 midterm elections. In recent years, I have come to believe that "conservatism"—broadly defined as the shared politics, policy, and practice of the Republican-led House of Representatives and the Bush White House—has become an arrogant defender of ideological excess and entrenched interests and privileges (albeit different ones) to match the Liberal establishment of the 1960s.

At some risk of oversimplification, the power structure Washington conservatism now represents can be described as Wall Street, Big Energy, multinational corporations, the Military-Industrial Complex, the Religious Right, the Market Extremist thinktanks, and the Rush Limbaugh Axis. I do realize that skepticism of various portions of this *entente* can be found in the speeches and writings of conservatives from John Adams through Theodore Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower to John McCain. More power to them.

But the practical question is narrower: Can anything plausibly present-

ing itself as "conservatism" thrive by indicting this grouping or even two-thirds of it? This is important, because history and logic suggest that the grassroots and rhetorical opposition to this combination should come from the center-Left, not from "conservatism."

Yes, there are caveats. The business wing of the Democratic Party—Senator Joe Lieberman comes to mind—has corporate hem-kissers to match those in high GOP position, and center-Left clarity of criticism and opportunity may suffer.

And yes, there may be a five, seven or nine percent minority of those calling themselves conservatives who dislike the new *entente* enough to go into open, substantial, and sustained opposition. I am just skeptical of their having a) much grassroots appeal or b) ability to maintain a broad indictment or dialogue under the conservative label. Merely organizing might insure a fringe and peripheral tone—tired Right-wing complaints in a new package.

These skepticisms and qualms having been stated, it seems clear—setting aside the powerful caveat of renewed terrorism and its further ideological

fall-out—that by the measurements of the past, the conservative establishment described in the second paragraph is vulnerable—prone to the usual electoral comeuppance meted out to business-financial Republicanism indulging its cyclical tendencies to crony capitalism, Wall Street socialism, and speculative Waterloos.

Over the last two decades, the United States has seen the extraordinary dual advance of finance and extreme levels of wealth concentration and polarization. Indeed, they have fed on each other.

The rise of Wall Street and its outliers—let's call the process "financialization"—has to do with factors ranging from deregulation to computerization, the shift from bank accounts to mutual funds and rampant government favoritism. Deregulation made all sorts of new services possible and computerization made even more possible (and globally pervasive). Then the Bull Market provided a feeding trough and Paul Volcker, Alan Greenspan, Bob Rubin et al. provided the government favoritism. The upshot is that by the mid-1990s the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate





been almost as rampant, quintupling the cost of seeking open House and Senate seats, turning lobbyists into pocket party bosses and big contributors into a new nobility. Small wonder that the top one percent have got tax, deregulatory, and bail-out breaks from Congress. Didn't they pay for them, voters may believe, by providing half of the campaign contributions?

As for the ideological corruption, over the last two decades the fashionability of greed has created another reenactment of the Gilded Age: the resurgent popularity of survival of the fittest, *laissez-faire*, worship of markets, and all the rest of the moral accouterments. This is a familiar failure of conservatism.

A third feature of the present age is that much of the propaganda pumped out by the think-tanks and other intellectual advertising-agency types who talk about "free enterprise" is so much malarkey, as the people who write their checks know full well. "Corporate welfare" is a periodic lament of conservative libertarians who are otherwise "useful idiots," in terms of political propaganda, to their funders. Tax breaks are the staple of Washington tax consultants, lawyers, and lobbyists. "Military socialism"—in its pure form, plus the new homeland security entrepreneurialism—is one of the fastest-growing jewels in the crown of unfree-market economics.

But even the joys of Pentagon contracts negotiated by marketing vice presidents who used to be Air Force generals pale next to the achievements of the newest form of unfree enterprise: bail-outs, the collectivization of private risk, and the emergence of a financial sector better protected by government rescues, preferences, and guarantees than manufacturing ever was by tariff protection. Milton Friedman has made the point that finance

has flourished because it is protected by the Federal Reserve and is not allowed to fail.

Suffice it to say that without these ideological perversions and mutations, bank, stock market, and hedge fund failures would have occurred on a level—let us call it the free-market in action—that would have made the

cialism—"Wall Street socialism"? One would think this would be a battle cry of every American conservative who had ever read Friedman, Schumpeter, or Hayek. Instead, the conservative establishment gave it a wink, if not a salute.

A fourth point—evident from the historical example of the once-leading economic powers Holland and Britain:

WHAT TO MAKE, THEN, OF **WALL STREET SOCIALISM**? ONE WOULD THINK THIS WOULD BE A **BATTLE CRY** OF EVERY AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE WHO HAD EVER READ FRIEDMAN, SCHUMPETER, OR HAYEK.

stock market bubble impossible. The Dow-Jones Industrial Average probably could not have got above 5,000 and the Nasdaq probably could not have got above roughly where it is now, a more or less 75 percent decline later. The conservative establishment, however, including both Bush generations and Alan Greenspan, was at the heart of the bailouts.

Three hundred years ago, European mercantilism aimed at building wealth by accumulating as much gold as possible, with every conceivable assistance by the state. Possibly the recent bailout-spangled policy of trying to maximize the market capitalization of the stock indices and the banking and investment sector could appropriately be described as financial mercantilism. Ironically, back in the early 1980s, center-Left strategists like Robert Reich, recently Clinton's labor secretary, endorsed the idea of a so-called Industrial Policy, by which government aid, strategy, and benign regulation would be used to promote the embattled manufacturing sector. It was dismissed by critics contemptuously as "lemon socialism."

What to make, then, of lemon finan-

cialism—"Wall Street socialism"? One would think this would be a battle cry of every American conservative who had ever read Friedman, Schumpeter, or Hayek. Instead, the conservative establishment gave it a wink, if not a salute.

Historically, again using the example of those two preceding world economic leaders, the peril comes from taking on too much debt—the financial types will always find a justification in some new economic paradigm—and then recklessly undertaking a war (or wars) when a new peril emerges.

Obviously, the United States had to spend more money on security after 9/11. The notion, however, of starting a war in Iraq—throwing psychological and physical explosives into the psychological and physical munitions dump that is the Middle East—is exactly what the war lessons of Holland (1689–1713) and Britain (1914–1918 and 1939–1945) would warn against. The U.S. is already the world's leading debtor, with a current account deficit in the five percent range, and the unexpected consequences of a



poorly managed war in the Middle East could push it up to six or seven percent, the level at which postwar Britain became a financial basket case in 1948.

All of which brings me back to the Bush administration, a regime that mixes greed, inept economic management, business corruption, crony capitalism, triumphalist Pentagon saberrattling, and Axis of Evil foreign policy theology on a scale that already boggles foreign commentators.

Under normal circumstances, this would be a recipe for political disaster. The Bush-Cheney ties to financial chicanery, the tax-gutting subservience to top one percent wallets, the epidemic of corporate transgression, a war policy recklessness that makes Barry Goldwater look like Mahatma Gandhi, the collapse in stock indices as post-bubble economic weakness widens, the threat to Social Security and pensions, and the administration's cultural alliance with the Religious Right are all proven U.S. electoral vulnerabilities.

Five or ten years ago, this Enron-Armageddon fusion would have been unimaginable. If the psychologies of 9/11 do not reverberate with voters this fall, the old rules could apply again. August surveys, at least, suggest that the economy and the Bush administration have defined the Republican Party into a tight corner this November.

But if the terrorist threat does produce a wartime rallying to the party in power, the question of dealing with

Bush administration becomes more challenging. The administration represents a coalition of so many types of conservatives—business, financial, and cultural—that it is hard to imagine a serious defection or dissent on the part of Americans who call themselves conservatives. Whatever theoretical conservatism, or portions of it, may think, operational conservatism seems to have redefined itself around just what Bush represents—the economics of privilege, the foreign policy of war, and the culture of guns and Sun Belt fundamentalism.

Should George W. Bush become a second Hoover (or even a second George H. W. Bush), things could change. But right now, I would guess that not even ten percent of self-identified conservatives would rally around an opposition to his administration's multiple high profile characteristics.

Thus it is hard to see much opposition coming from "conservatism." Indeed, many of the administration's worst attributes pivot on its blend of conservatisms carried to excess (or incompetence). Further terrorist crises would only escalate that appeal by making the military-industrial complex aspect of Bush's regime less indictable.

In a piecemeal sort of way, some kind of conservative thought process might be rallied around a mix of Barry Goldwater's indictment of the Religious Right, Milton Friedman's criticism of financial bailouts, John McCain's disdain of Washington cor-

ruption, Dwight Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex and Ross Perot's impugning of the multinational corporations. But with the administration including so much of the conservative power structure, the odds are that any attempt at institutionalizing a conservative dissent would wind up mobilizing nothing but a small fringe, even a kooky fringe.

American politics has a long tradition of mobilizing anti-establishment constituencies against an entrenched national power structure combining arrogance with an outdated and failing viewpoint. Thirty-four to thirty-six years ago, that described Washington liberalism. Today, it better describes entrenched Washington conservatism.

Outsider conservatism is much more of a practical oxymoron than it was five or even three years ago. For some whose identification with "conservatism" goes back to the very different context of 1966-74, today's Washington milieu is fatal.

Remnants may wish to keep an old flame alive, and there are certainly old theoretical flames that remain worthy of being fanned. In realistic terms, however, the greater need to block the Greed-and-Armageddon politics operating out of Potomac City becomes controlling.

Does it make tactical sense in 2002 to support Democratic retention of at least the Senate? Is the best bet in 2004 to support either a Republican primary bid or an independent presidential bid by John McCain?

Agreeing in both instances. I clearly am no longer an operational conservative—and perhaps no longer any other kind, either. ■

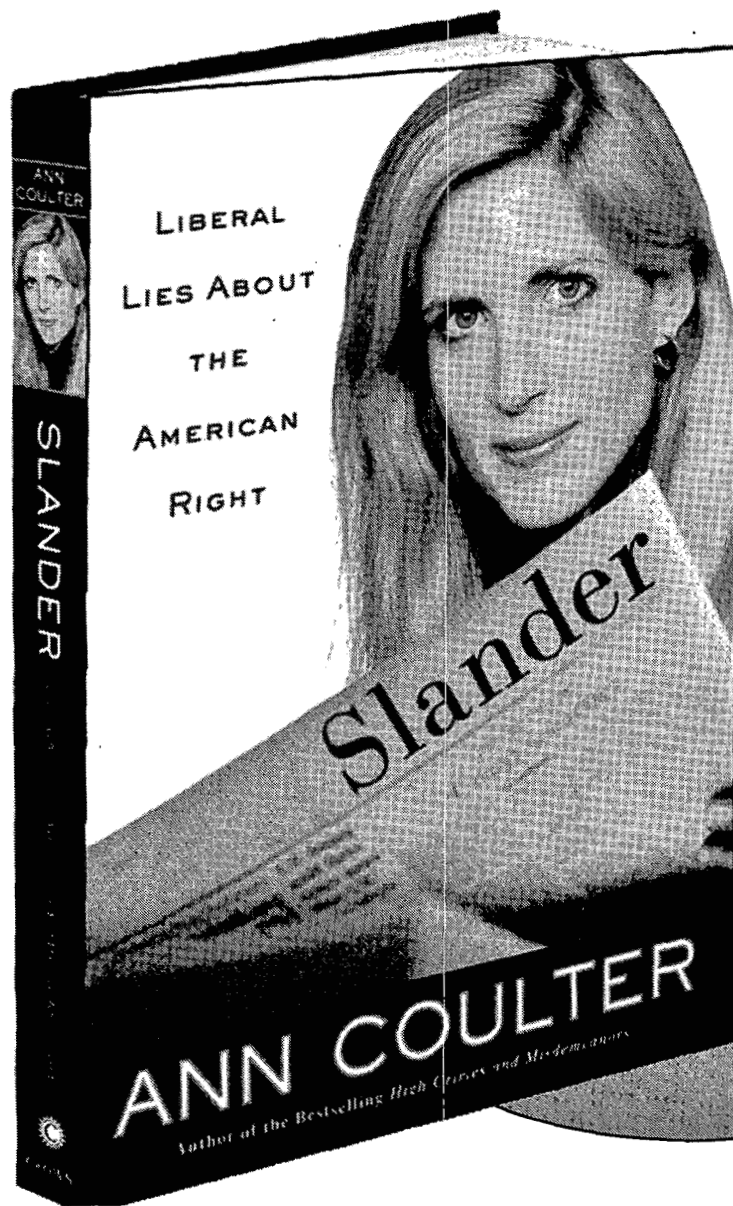
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*Kevin Phillips's new national best-seller, **Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich**, was published in May.*

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# Filing for Dollars

Holocaust reparations honcho Ed Fagan goes global.  
His goal: make American business pay for apartheid.

By Howard Sutherland

BUCCANEER LAWYERING is an American tradition. But an early federal law aimed at real buccaneers is now a blunderbuss for American legal privateers cruising the world for prizes. A suit filed in June in federal court in New York by class action impresario Edward Fagan is testing the reach of the Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789. The target: apartheid.

Is the goal a payday for apartheid's victims, or is it really a warm-up for the ultimate shakedown: slavery "reparations" payments to black Americans?

Flush from a \$1.25 billion settlement of Jewish Holocaust survivors' claims against Swiss banks, Fagan is suing a growing assortment of European and American banks and corporations on behalf of "persons who lived in South Africa ... from 1948 to the present and who suffered damages as a result of human rights violations and crimes ... committed against persons of South Africa through the system of apartheid." The complaint alleges that Citigroup, IBM, UBS, Credit Suisse, Royal Dutch/Shell and others "conspired ... to fund, provide financing for and and/or technology, systems, equipment and/or products that enabled ... apartheid to commit

crimes against humanity ... in South Africa ... from 1948 to 1993."

Fagan claims the defendants' "conspiracy was designed to earn and retain illicit profits from the crimes against humanity" and that "Defendants (*sic*) profiteering from the aforesaid conspiracy is continuing to the present." The complaint details abuse and murder suffered in South Africa by his plaintiffs and their kin, but cites no specific wrongdoing by the defendants. Unlike the Holocaust suits, any liability is indirect, making a court victory doubtful. Probably Fagan hopes politically correct corporate defendants' timidity will induce them to settle. (Calls to his office went unreturned.)

Fagan seeks broad relief, starting with certifying unspecified thousands of non-white South Africans as a "class," relieving lawyers of the burden of producing more individual plaintiffs. He demands the appointment of an independent historical commission (snubbing South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has sifted through apartheid's history for years), restitution for "unjust enrichment" and "illicit profits," and, predictably, compensatory and punitive damages. Fagan isn't

talking dollars, but some observers estimate total claims of \$50 to \$100 billion, dwarfing total Holocaust payouts of approximately \$8 billion.

Apartheid was the creation of South Africa's National Party, which won power in 1948, and legislated racial separation and restricted the vote to whites. South Africa had never been a racially integrated country, so few foreign businesses saw the advent of formal apartheid as reason to leave.

Apartheid South Africa only became a pariah in the 1960s, and only in the 1980s did sanctions really begin to bite. According to Fagan, foreign lenders and businesses were all that kept apartheid going between the financial crisis of 1984 and the all-race elections of 1994 that turned South Africa over to Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress. That is utterly speculative, but Fagan wants those "supporters" to pay for keeping apartheid alive after he says it should have starved to death. He thinks the ATCA may be just the crowbar to pry open their vaults.

Enacted in the U.S. Congress' first session, the ATCA says: "The [federal] district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action by an alien for a tort only, committed in violation



of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States." That's all.

The ATCA is an odd law, offering foreigners an American forum even when harm occurred neither in the United States nor at Americans' hands. This Delphic statute, dormant until 1980, originally gave foreign mariners some redress against stateless pirates. While the "law of nations" (international law) was then ill-defined, all civilized nations agreed piracy violated it.

The ATCA revived when a Paraguayan woman sued another Paraguayan, a policeman who had tortured and killed her brother—in Paraguay. The federal appeals court in New York held that torture violates the law of nations and U.S. courts had jurisdiction because both accuser and accused were present in the United States. Since that case, *Filartiga v. Peña-Irala*, the ATCA has become a weapon of human rights and environmental groups who want American courts to right the world's wrongs.

Fagan is stretching the ATCA in attempting to win damages for indirect harms. A usual condition to success in an ATCA suit is that the defendant directly harm the plaintiff. That was present in the Holocaust cases. It is not in the apartheid suit, where South Africans inflicted all the plaintiffs' injuries.

Other problems arise. Fagan alleges a conspiracy. That fails: the defendants didn't hide doing business in South Africa; they put it in their annual reports and put up with protestors at their annual meetings. As for American banks, key South African operations were exempted from U.S. sanctions legislation, including refinancing debt, so Fagan wants to litigate political questions Congress has settled. It is a principle of international law, from the Nuremberg trials, that merely lending to an international law violator—even if the lender

knows of the violations—is not itself a violation of international law, so jurisdiction under the ATCA is lacking.

A verdict holding foreign banks and corporations liable for the South African government's failings would grossly overextend the ATCA. A better reading of the ATCA sees it as an anti-piracy law based on one of the few specific powers ("to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction") the Constitution actually extends to the federal judiciary. Ed Fagan is pushing that old law beyond its limits.

Born in Harlingen, Texas in 1953, Fagan graduated from Cardozo Law School at Yeshiva University in 1980, and eventually started his own firm. Times were lean until the Holocaust breakthrough. Fagan was one of many lawyers, and not the most eminent, on those cases, but he became the best known. Frequent, and feisty, press conferences and television appearances were his trademark. He got \$1.25 billion for his clients and a \$4 million fee for himself, the highest for any lawyer involved.

His success drew criticism, some from erstwhile allies. In a scathing 20/20 exposé, New York University professor Burt Neuborne, a lawyer on the cases, called Fagan a publicity hound who added nothing to the cases' strategy. NYU legal ethicist Stephen Gillers alleged "client abuse." In a December 1998 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, ADL national director Abraham Foxman, no foe of Holocaust reparations, singled him out: "One of the lead attorneys in the Swiss case, Ed Fagan, is now traveling the world seeking new clients. In Poland he remarked that if Hitler moved across Europe from West to East looting and robbing, he, Mr. Fagan, would move from East to West reclaiming the losses. There is no place for ambulance chasers in this serious and sacred undertaking." Fagan says

he met his obligations: "I know for a fact that the majority of these cases wouldn't have happened without me. That's not bravado, it's just a fact."

A verdict for the apartheid plaintiffs is unlikely. That's good, for a win would hurt American business, burden international commerce, and damage Third World economies reliant on First World investment.

Fagan may want to help non-white South Africans, but victory for him would be ruinous for them too. A verdict against the defendants would make copycat suits against South African companies inevitable and could devastate South Africa's fragile economy. Increased risk of liability would keep many companies out of developing countries, few of which have model governments. American plaintiffs' lawyers would have a worldwide fishing license. The apartheid suit is both low-percentage and reckless. So why is Fagan doing it?

Companies wary of bad PR might pay up. Or not, given the high cost of such a precedent. More likely, Fagan hopes his apartheid suit, a U.S. slavery reparations suit he has already filed against various American banks and companies, and the blockbuster reparations suit Harvard professor Charles Ogletree is preparing against the federal government will reinforce each other. That isn't true in law, but might be in public perception as racial demagogues paint long-ended American slavery and South African apartheid as a continuum of white oppression. Perhaps he really believes it's cosmic justice for the world's oppressed.

Whatever Ed Fagan's motives, U.S. District Judge Richard Casey should throw this case out of court, and cut the ATCA down to size. ■

*Howard Sutherland is an attorney in New York.*



# Arts & Letters

## BOOKS

[*Invasion: How America Still Welcomes Terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces to Our Shores*, by Michelle Malkin (Regnery, 256 pages)]

### The Unguarded Gate

By Peter Brimelow

NASTY THINGS seem to happen to people who write critically about immigration. Accordingly, the small catacomb of immigration reformers—so similar to the persecuted minority that constituted the American conservative movement thirty years ago—is very worried for Michelle Malkin.

This young Filipino-American woman has made a remarkable debut as a conservative syndicated columnist. She is already in nearly 100 newspapers, including the *Washington Times*, the *New York Post* and the *Miami Herald*. But she has recently begun to specialize in detailed and devastating exposés of the shambles that passes for U.S. immigration policy. Such is the political correctness of establishment journalism, both Left and Right, that this makes Malkin virtually unique. She has even attacked, for its blind support of amnesty for illegals, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, the Great Khan of the conservative establishment, which does not take *lèse-majesté* lightly.

Doesn't she know what's good for her?

Apparently not. Malkin's new book,

*Invasion: How America Still Welcomes Terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces to Our Shores* is an important addition to the literature. It may not advance her career. But it is a signal service to her country.

Tolstoy famously wrote that all happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. Pretty much the same is true of immigration books. Pro-immigration books—for example Joel Millman's *The Other Americans* or Sanford J. Ungar's *Fresh Blood*—are invariably triumphalist, anecdotal, larded with celebrations of the authors' own forbears from Russia, and fatally light on data. In contrast, anti-immigration books are much more diverse, and often highly technical. Sometimes, as in the case of Roy Beck's *The Case Against Immigration*, they even are at pains to reject the sobriquet "anti-immigration," arguing correctly but vainly that no-one wants to shut the borders completely, merely to correct glaring flaws in current policy. (Needless to say, this makes no difference to immigration enthusiasts in the establishment media. All critics of immigration policy are routinely labeled "anti-immigrant"—even when, as in my own case, they are immigrants themselves.)

The reason for this systematic difference goes beyond the usual sloth, stupidity, and assorted other vices endemic in journalism, although these are certainly in evidence. Immigration is a new issue in American politics. It simply did not exist in its current form until the 1965 Immigration Act unexpectedly rekindled mass immigration after a forty-year lull. What American debate is experiencing is a classic paradigm shift, with the old pro-immigration orthodoxy

being undermined by new facts and by new analysis derived from those facts.

The current crop of politicians and pundits generally spent their formative years in the mid-twentieth century immigration lull. Most of them are simply too old to recognize the new reality. In this respect, it is significant that Michelle Malkin was born only in 1970, two years after the 1965 Act took effect. Like Marxism, with which it has some odd similarities, dogmatic immigration enthusiasm may well be undermined in the end, not by the force of rational argument, but by relentless generational shift.

Malkin's unique angle on immigration policy is in effect a direct answer to the *Wall Street Journal*'s damage-control maneuvers after last September's terrorist attacks. Writing on the Opinion Journal website on January 15, James Taranto gloated that

"You'd think a horrific sneak attack by 19 foreigners on American soil would be a perfect opportunity for the close-the-borders crowd, but they've scarcely been heard from. [This is an in-joke reference to the *Wall Street Journal*'s notorious refusal to print contrary viewpoints on immigration, even from fellow-conservatives.] Of course, their argument wouldn't really stand up; it's preposterous on its face to suggest that Mexican gardeners are national-security threat, even if Arab flight students are."

Malkin's response: it's the *process*, stupid. By focusing tightly on the way in which foreigners are admitted to the U.S., she demonstrates in crushing detail what 9/11 made clear to all observers less committed than

Taranto: the process has collapsed. Whether the applicants are visitors or immigrants, and quite apart from any issue of security or economic benefit, the plain fact is that U.S. government agencies have lost their ability to guard the gates—let alone evict any undesirable who has actually entered.

The beauty of Malkin's approach is that it completely bypasses the vast questions in which the immigration debate often bogs down—such as how many immigrants should come in (i.e. should the government in effect second-guess Americans' decision to stabilize their population) and who (should the historic American nation be transformed by massive immigration from non-traditional sources).

Of course, these questions still have to be answered. But, Malkin says in effect, whatever your answer, you still have to enforce it through the admissions (and deportation) process. And, right now, that can't be done.

Thus Malkin notes that, of 48 Islamic militants involved in terrorist conspiracies during the last decade, only sixteen were here "legally" on temporary visas as students, tourists or business travelers. (She could have added that even these were technically illegal because they had not admitted the real purpose of their visit was to fly airliners into buildings, etc., something the U.S. vetting process failed to pick up.) Seventeen were permanent residents or citizens (obviously another vetting failure). Twelve were illegal immigrants. The others had applied for political asylum or been granted amnesty after illegal stays. In all, twenty-one had violated U.S. immigration law at some point.

If that's not enough warning that the system is broken, Malkin points out, the Immigration and Naturalization Service actually mailed student visa approval notices to two of those "legal" entrants, Mohamed Atta and Marwan Al Shehu, six months *after* they had died in the September 11 attacks. "I could barely get my coffee down," President Bush blustered

when he heard the news. Nevertheless, his administration stood by as higher education lobbyists shouted down Senator Dianne Feinstein's proposal for a temporary moratorium on student visas to re-establish control.

A million foreigners have been admitted to the U.S. on student visas. The government has no idea how many are really studying.

Immigration policy, in Malkin's meticulous analysis, is basically driven by special interests and bureaucratic inertia. Higher education is one such special interest. The travel industry—aided by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's wife Linda, a lobbyist—is another. Pressure for faster handling of paperwork is intense, with the result that at least one 9/11 hijacker came through John F. Kennedy Airport with obviously incomplete documentation. Malkin prints a memo from an official at Los Angeles International, directing inspectors not to respond to requests from airlines to vet suspected illegal immigrants and not to make disruptive group arrests *even in the case of "suspected terrorists, kidnapping, slavery..."* The memo is dated February 12, 2002.

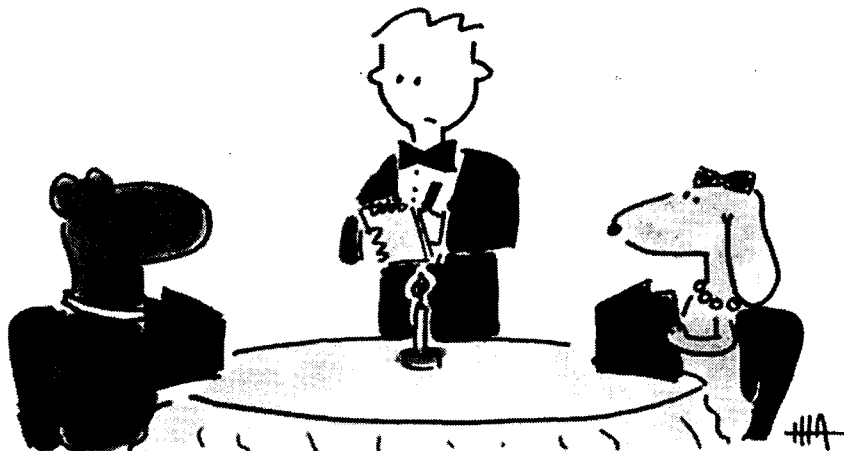
The INS is manifestly on the wrong side in all this. To some extent, the agency's functioning seems to have become an end in itself. Malkin reports that in the six months after

9/11, it ground out another 50,000 tourist, business, and student visas to non-Israeli visitors from the Middle East and another 140,000 to visitors from al-Qaeda havens in South Asia, apparently without any thought of security. Additionally, senior INS officials have quite clearly gone native to an extraordinary degree—"it's not a crime to be in the U.S. illegally," said INS deputy director Fred Alexander last year. (As Malkin patiently documents, it is.)

Malkin has changed my own thinking on the INS. I had always assumed, in my reasonable way, that the INS was a victim of poor laws and proliferating workload. Malkin reports enough management failure and corruption (involving at least one official I interviewed for my own immigration book, *Alien Nation*) to convince me that the problem is systemic.

As she says, how come the federal government can do instant background checks on law-abiding American gun buyers—but not when it catches illegal immigrants?

(The laws are poor, though. Malkin recounts the denouement of the 1996 Citizenship USA scandal, in which the Clinton White House pressured the INS to naturalize some 1.3 million immigrants—i.e. instant Democrats—without adequate background checks. The Justice Department subsequently



"We'll both have the homework."

tried to revoke the citizenship of some 6,300 who turned out to be felons but was blocked on appeal. The judge invited Congress to step in—but it did not, despite Republican control.)

I would have liked to see Malkin apply her method to disease, which, like terrorism, is a wild card in the current immigration debate. Screening immigrants for disease was constant even at Ellis Island, and significant numbers were rejected. But today, the U.S. is arguably more exposed to immigrant-born disease than ever in its history, if only because of illegal border crossings. Tuberculosis has already reappeared. West Nile may have been immigrant-imported. Awful things are being incubated in the vast human petri dishes created by Third World urbanization. And they're coming here—unless they're stopped.

But Malkin makes a more immediately dramatic point: she summarizes the story of Angel Resendiz, the "Railway Killer," a Mexican who repeatedly entered the U.S. illegally over a 25-year period, had at least 25 encounters with U.S. law enforcement, was deported three times and "voluntarily returned" at least four times, and who, between 1997 and 1999, is known to have murdered at least 12 Americans—the last four after being released by the INS, although there were already warrants outstanding for his arrest.

This story, complete with harrowing vignettes of Resendiz' archetypical Middle American victims, is a classic piece of journalism. It is a disgrace to the establishment media that it could never appear there.

Resendiz liked to fracture his women victims' skulls and rape them as they died. Their terrible deaths are on James Tarantó's head—and on the heads of every single immigration enthusiast who has minimized this mortal threat to America. ■

*Peter Brimelow is the author of Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster and editor of VDARE.com*

*[Why I Am A Catholic Garry Wills, Houghton Mifflin, 390 pages]*

*[Papal Sin, Garry Wills, Doubleday, 326 pages]*

## The Devil and Garry Wills

*(with apologies to C.S. Lewis)*

By J. P. Zmirak

Dear Wordworm,  
I write to you with satisfaction on the progress of a creature who has enjoyed my ministrations for some 50 years, since he was a disobedient seminarian. As you ought to know already, Garry Wills is an eminent apostate from the Enemy's church, a cult whose very survival stands as a living rebuke to the bumbling idleness of so many in our ranks.

I can hear you sneering that mine is no great achievement. That the world is full of "freethinkers," ex-Christians and anti-Christians—herded behind the ideologies we launched, goaded by ambition, or lured on by rank pornography and vice. (These primates will be shocked when we show them how many of their brainier sorts were blindly following their codpieces!) But Wills is that choicest piece of tempting—an apostate who insists upon remaining within the church!

You know I've devoted myself to the care and feeding of "intellectuals" (or "brains and eggs," as we call them upon arrival Down Here.) Not scholars, who write to impress each other; or journalists, who fill the space between underwear adverts; but those self-promoting publicists of ideas who sway the human "élites." Replacing the Enemy's priests, these clerics—with our energetic help—exert that ill-defined, high-irresistible force called "opinion." Like the god Juggernaut, pushed by a hundred unseen hands, it

rolls with blind ferocity pulling all in its wake—except for a few rash souls with bumbling tempters. (Nicodemus, Athanasius, and Thomas More come to mind—remember feasting on their case-workers, little Wordworm?)

Wills does not sit in the bishop's throne, like those ashen bureaucrats you've been managing; such pastors linger for decades, mouthing stale creeds and fine meals, comforting the tepid and repelling the fervent, starving and bugging their sheep. In their bloodless way, they do our work, and they will be rewarded in spades.

But Our Father Below demands juicier souls, ones with meat on the bone. And Wills is fat with it! He preens on the public stage like a diva, feted and praised by the powerful, dubbed by those who hate the Enemy's church as its "respectable" spokesman. In short, his hand helps steer the Juggernaut.

Well-educated in an almost pure form of the Enemy's religion, by the Jesuits before we swallowed them, Wills has digested its history, adding to his own dull coat a sheen gained by rubbing up against such curs as Augustine, Newman and Chesterton. Those names, which send icy pain through our unfleshed frames, roll lightly off his pen. But just as Our Father reclaims the Enemy's own words for our cause, so I've guided Wills to wield these fierce foes of heresy against their church. Recall how old Gobcramp trained "traditionalists" to comb the church fathers for their cruelest, most unchristian phrases—to wrench out of context, and render repulsive faith, hope, and charity. Wills makes ample use of Gobcramp's database in a farrago of sweetly scandalous gossip, *Papal Sin*.

Wills presents as "news" the old, dark moments of the papacy—times when we came achingly close to Conquest—as "proof" that its claims to consistency are not a mistake but a conscious fraud. Of course, Wills wields our old, trusty weapons—*ad hominem* attacks, feigned shock that



the Dark Ages were *barbarous*, and rank snobbery towards the poor, the foreign, and the dead. A special delight is his treatment of the church's 2000-year-old teaching on birth control, a subject with which Wills is nearly obsessed. (I've seen to that!) Wills equates periodic abstinence to limit births with the use of foams, latex contraptions, and abortifacient chemicals—since they all aim at childless intercourse. You'd think so sharp a mind might take the next logical step—moving from birth to weight control, to wonder whether dieting is the same thing as bulimia.

Wills heaps ridicule on the (poisonous!) ideas of the current pope—that sausage-fingered Polack who glorifies the “goodness” of marital sex, and crassly urges Catholic men to see to their wives' orgasms. (His vulgar, *unspiritual* quality recalls my grim tours of duty producing pornography for the Southern Front.) When the old man teaches that sexual acts can only be “holy” when they are subject to “self-control,” Wills mocks him for prudishness—as if any act could be *human*, much less what the Enemy calls “virtuous,” when done as a spastic response to compulsion! It seems one side effect of the Pill is to make men forget their Aristotle.

Wills' “mentor,” that old fraud Chesterton, saw the church as especially “glorious” when she resisted public opinion and refuted popular heresies. But Wills denounces the popes for refusing to follow The Press and the Zogby Poll. Where Newman honored doctrines that develop over time, Wills veers wildly between archaism and modernism, the cult of the Juggernaut!

In my new masterpiece, *Why I Am a Catholic*, Wills answers a chorus of requests from readers troubled by *Papal Sin*, earnestly asking how he can remain in that church, having demolished its authority. He admits that a few notes came from those who disliked the book—whose authors all (all!) confessed that they hadn't read it. These pious biddies he dismisses with a pat on the

head, and proceeds to dig among the Roman ruins to build a church worthy of him. Yet even here, two-thirds of the book consist of still more attacks on the papacy! Wills simply cannot resist. The last third of the book is all that Wills can offer as positive creed—a milk and water gruel almost harmless to Our Father and his Kingdom.

If the past is “another country,” Wills tramps through it as an Ugly American, sneering at practices that confuse him (such as physical mortification, commended by thousands of Enemy “saints”—which he dispatches in a line or two); feigning surprise that contemporary prejudices did not prevail 1000 years ago; obscuring and skewing evidence—all to build up a high school debater's brief against Catholicism. But for most primates that will be quite enough. No, none of Wills' charges *quite* proves his point—that church teaching on faith and morals has zig-zagged recklessly. But he (or *we*) will simply adduce another charge and another, drawing hasty (always hostile) conclusions in a paragraph. Where scholars disputed for centuries, Wills ends the question in a sophomore's summary:

- Pope Honorius, who wrote a private letter around 637 too tolerant of heretics. Condemned by the church for laxity, Honorius is made out here as a full-blown heretic himself, and his note an infallible pronouncement.
- The Council of Florence, which declared infallibly that there is “no salvation outside the church.” That doctrine, which later popes carefully nuanced—noting that *membership* in the church is a mystery known only to the Enemy—Wills calls a simple lie, one revoked at Vatican II. (We did our best. That endless palaver, begun with so much hope, ending with a whimper of orthodoxy... I still blame Slughob.)
- The popes who urged Catholics to rebel against Elizabeth I. Wills damns them for fomenting treason. A later pope told Catholics *not* to rebel against the Tsar—so Wills

damns *him* for fostering tyranny. Wills drubs popes for supporting King Louis's autocracy, and then for *opposing* Napoleon's. The stark, awful power of infallibility in faith and morals Wills smuggles into *politics* and inverts: The papacy is miraculously wrong, each time.

- Pius IX and Leo XIII, who denounced the separation of church and state—in their day, always our first step towards persecution—are nicely drawn as monsters, and Vatican II recast as a caucus of the ACLU. An awful consistency threads from those popes, through that dreary Council, to the current Pole—as that appalling priest Brian Harrison proves in *Religious Liberty and Contraception*. We know this, of course. But Wills' readers will not! Take special care to guide your clients away from such websites as Biblical Evidence for Catholicism and the Roman Theological Forum, each stuffed with careful defenses of the Enemy's self-serving creed.
- Pius X who taught that dogmas cannot evolve. Against him Wills cites Newman. But the “doctrines” whose development Newman discerned are bluntly different from “dogmas,” which (these Christlings believe) must always be understood *in the exact sense originally intended*. Pius X noted the difference, and praised Newman accordingly. Can such a distinction—as stark as that dividing an American law from an Article of its Constitution—escape sophisticated readers, or the writer? Dear Wordworm notice how similar are the *sounds* employed—dog, doc, doc, dog. Remember how lazy and busy primates are, how eager to soothe their sneaking bad consciences. Recall how many souls we ran off from the awful, sacramental Presence of the Enemy, by inventing “hocus pocus,” that cheap pun on “*hoc est corpus*.” Since the Enemy has imprisoned these hapless spirits in bodies, we are free to make sport with their sensory limitations! The sheer impunity is half the fun.

I could not, of course, provide for Wills any clinching cases of "infallible" self-contradiction—or indeed, any arguments that could withstand what the humans call a "Google search." But as you've seen, I did not need to. These books are finely tailored for reading on an airplane: free of ambiguities, brightly mirroring the prejudices of their public, always focused on a guiding principle which I have forbidden Wills to perceive: the Infallibility of the Baby Boom.

Wills accepts no Catholic teaching that might offend his comfortably secularized readers. Rejecting popes, councils, and ancient interpretations of the Bible, Wills adverts incessantly to the "sense of the faithful" as his infallible authority. But of course, he accepts nothing of the kind. The vulgar masses of baptized bipeds adore such horrors as the roses of Guadalupe, the dancing sun at

Fatima, even the virginity of *that Woman*. Wills dismisses all these with a sniff, pointing to our favorite experts against the beliefs of a billion faithful and an ecumenical Council. He notes (oh, this is delicious!) that the "the New Testament is a book of theology, not of obstetrics or gynecology." It is not the hordes of grubby Mexicans and sweaty Sudanese who must be consulted—that would be disastrous!—but educated, prosperous, book-buying Westerners. These "faithful" we may rely upon—to join us Down Here, like a flight of autumn leaves.

I can hear you carping, Wordworm. You note that Wills still says the Rosary—a habit I have not been able to crack. You are laughing up your sleeve at me, little nephew; sure that this folk devotion will save this self-crowned antipope in the end. You'd normally have a point. It's appalling to read here that Wills still prays the plastic chap-

let favored by peasant "saints." But read attentively, and see just how very *proud* I have made Wills of his humility, how satisfied he is with himself for praying to the non-virgin every day, and how he preens about it. In his exegesis of the toadying prayers entailed, the reader can't help noticing just how *very learned* and wise Wills is, how much more nuanced and polished than those dreary, drooling popes. And in a final touch, Wills simply cannot withhold the information that he frequently says the Rosary in Biblical Greek! "Humility" such as this is perfectly at home in Our Father's Kingdom. So stop licking your chops, little Wordworm. This mutton is mine.

Your Affectionate Uncle,  
Screedbait

*J.P. Zmirak is the author of Wilhelm Röpke: Swiss Localist, Global Economist (ISI Books, 2001).*

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## MUSIC

[*Shakey: Neil Young's Biography*, Jimmy McDonough, Random House, 708 pages]

### An Amazing Force

By Steve Sailer

OF ALL THE veteran rock stars featured at last September's post-9/11 telethon "America: A Tribute to Heroes," Neil Young earned the highest praise from critics by squeaking out John Lennon's defeatist "Imagine" ("Imagine there's no countries ... Nothing to kill or die for"). In contrast, Tom Petty, with his long gray-blond beard making him look like some crazed old Johnny Reb who had been holed up in the Blue Ridge Mountains surviving on raw squirrel meat ever since Appomattox, delivered a defiant version of his song "I Won't Back Down"—and was roasted by the reviewers for his insensitive pro-Americanism.

Yet, Young (who is still a Canadian citizen but views himself as an American) seemed to grasp that Petty had been on the right track. Outside the

entertainment establishment, few Americans were so out of touch with common sense and basic human emotions as to desire a return to old-fashioned anti-war songs of the tin-soldiers-and-Nixon-coming ilk that Young had performed with Crosby, Stills and Nash.

In December, Young quietly released "Let's Roll," the first patriotic ode to the businessmen-warriors of Flight 93. Unfortunately, it wasn't a great piece of music, but it showed that the 57-year-old Young was more in touch with how Americans felt than almost anybody else in the music industry. For someone who had enjoyed his first hit, Buffalo Springfield's insidious "Mr. Soul," back in 1968, simply avoiding irrelevancy was no small accomplishment.

At 788 pages, Jimmy McDonough's *Shakey: Neil Young's Biography* may teach the non-fanatical reader more about Neil Young than he cares to know. Still, compared to other doorstep biographies, it's a reasonably quick and interesting read. Despite Young's ample abuse of cocaine, marijuana, and alcohol during the 1970s, he's still in full possession of a lively and cantankerous intelligence.

The book's vast heapings of facts are especially necessary because the author never quite grasps who Young

really is. After spending six years hanging around with his hero and four more writing it up, McDonough, a rock idealist, concludes perplexedly, "Young was an unsolved mystery, hermetically sealed." Fortunately, the author accumulates enough data to allow his more worldly readers to put together a coherent portrait of Young and, perhaps, come to like him better as a man.

Young's transformation from "Imagine" to "Let's Roll" shocked many, but it's never been hard for Young to change. He has run through as many personas as Madonna has: folkie (back before "folk" implied "lesbian"), granaola head, drug-doomed decadent, new wave Devo-wannabe, country singer, Blues Brother clone, and grunge godfather. He'd showed his rebellious streak by publicly backing Ronald Reagan for a few years.

The first record I ever bought was Young's 1969 "Cinnamon Girl," a plodding but thunderous slab of lowbrow garage metal. I still turn it up whenever it comes on the radio.

The next year, though, Young released the song I most love to hate, the piano and French horn ballad "After the Goldrush," a recording that the hippie era has yet to live down. Young's ludicrous lyrics ("Flying Mother Nature's silver seed to a new home in the sun") and whiny vocal would have been easy to dismiss except for the catchy folk melody that twined like kudzu around my brain.

Unlike Madonna, though, Young seldom changes to stay current. In fact, he often seems gloriously oblivious to post-1960s music. In his most famous lyrics from 1979's powerhouse "Rust Never Sleeps" album—"It's better to burn out than to fade away ... / The king is gone but he's not forgotten / This is the story of a Johnny Rotten"—Young ignorantly confused the Sex Pistols' recently dead bassist Sid Vicious with Johnny Rotten, their very much living (and highly annoyed) singer.

When he's making an album, Young holes up on his three square mile

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ranch near Santa Cruz with various rock and roll fossils such as Crazy Horse, the notoriously inept backup band that has been furnishing Young's electric guitar records with thudding, funkless, undanceable rhythms for the last 30 years.

Young is a sort of passive-aggressive Little Napoleon who either dominates everyone around him, or leaves. Crosby, Stills and Nash were the most popular band in America *before* Young joined, but Young immediately called the tunes—even though he was manifestly putting most of his effort into his solo career. “As soon as they started to rehearse,” recounts Young's business manager, “It was clear Neil was gonna be in charge. Everyone was afraid of Neil. Because Neil walked.”

Young prefers working with mediocre musicians like Crazy Horse who can't afford to walk out on *him*. One of Young's producers observed, “He doesn't wanna play with really good musicians because they'll bust him. Because he's not an amazing musician—he's just an amazing *force*. So, it's always safe with guys that are less than you—you just tell 'em what to do and you know they'll do it.”

During his Capitol Records apogee of 1953–1961, Frank Sinatra had naturally made use of the best sidemen, composers, lyricists, and arrangers in the business. A few years later, though, Bob Dylan introduced the pop music version of the auteur theory, the assumption that the do-it-all singer-composer-lyricist-guitarist inevitably created more emotionally authentic music than specialists who each did one thing extremely well. Young's broad but not infinitely deep set of talents was perfectly suited to make him Dylan's most prominent disciple. Most importantly, since almost nobody is actually gifted enough to do all these jobs terribly well, Young had the requisite masculine self-assurance to ignore the skeptics who pointed out that the emperor had no voice. That Young had willed himself to become a famous singer despite his fingernails-on-a-

blackboard pipes just showed his fans that he truly had concrete *cojones*. In the rock era, music became ever more of a “testostocracy” ruled not by the most talented, but by the most aggressive and self-convinced.

The secret to Young's career longevity appears to be that his health has steadily improved with age. Today, the superior physical and mental constitution he inherited from his mother Rassy, a tomboy champion amateur golfer, and his sportswriter father Scott, hard-working author of 30 books, is no longer dragged down by the polio, epilepsy, and drug abuse of his younger years. He now lifts weights, works out aerobically, and plays a lot of golf. Of course, some might argue that after hoovering up all that cocaine before his second marriage in 1978, a naturally robust individual like Young sends the wrong message about the danger of drugs to the mediocre masses simply by not being dead by now.

Young became obsessed with model trains when he discovered they were one of the few toys that his quadriplegic son Ben could play by pushing a button with his forehead. Young soon became an important technological innovator in the model train industry, delivering breakthroughs in realistic locomotive sounds. He bought a stake in the venerable manufacturer Lionel. Unfortunately, the book ends before the sad day in 2001 when Lionel moved its factory to South Korea, laying off 325 unionized workers. Young's most consistent political cause has been the protection of the jobs of Americans who work with their hands. So, it's too bad we never learn the inside story of what must have been a wrenching time for Young in his dual roles as an owner and a union-supporter.

*Shakey* reveals that today Young lives a secret life of surprising normality, just like thousands of other successful ex-hippie entrepreneurs in Northern California. Young spends many of his days managing his Silicon Valley research and development lab;

videoconferencing with his fellow Lionel executives; marketing his wares at toy industry conventions; playing golf; and coming home to his wife of 24 years. Young takes pride in his corporate skills. In the climactic chapter, Young taunts his baffled biographer, “Look around me—I'm a f—' capitalist businessman! ... I'm a good *businessman*, right?”

Young's emerging bourgeois virtues seem to disillusion poor McDonough. He probably would have been happier writing about a true tormented genius, such as Kurt Cobain of Nirvana. Cobain, the last great rock star, was the grunge version of the 19th century Romantic bohemian artist starving in a Parisian garret while swigging down absinthe to dull his tubercular pains. Similarly, just two weeks before the 1991 release of Nirvana's landmark album “Nevermind,” the sickly, drug-ravaged, but inspired Cobain was sleeping in the backseat of his Plymouth Valiant.

In contrast, when the boys in Buffalo Springfield were negotiating their first record deal in 1966, the 21-year-old Young, newly arrived in L.A. from Canada, had one final request for famed music executive Ahmet Ertegun, “I'm a golfer. Can you get me in a country club out here?”

Just before blowing his brains out in 1994, the 27-year-old Cobain included Young's line “It's better to burn out than to fade away” in his suicide note. Young, of course, has neither burnt out nor faded away, making some of his best music around the time of Cobain's death, when Young was nearly fifty. While Young's 2002 album “Are You Passionate?” is nothing special, it's better rock music than anybody back in 1966 imagined a 57-year-old could ever make.

The odds are that this time Young has finally entered the decline phase of his career. Then again, he's surprised us many times before. ■

Steve Sailer ([www.iSteve.com](http://www.iSteve.com)) is a columnist for VDARE.com.

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October 4-5, 2002

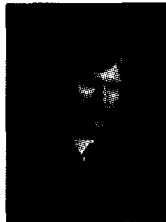


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.....

**WHEN:** October 4-5, 2002

Friday: 3 - 5 pm Panel: *Mass Immigration: Good or Bad for the Economy?*  
5:30 - 7 pm Welcoming Reception  
Saturday: 9 - 11 pm Panel: *Does Balkanization Loom? Immigration and America's Future*  
11 - 1 pm Panel: *Are Open Borders an Invitation to Terrorism?*  
1 - 2 pm Luncheon Speaker: Pat Buchanan  
2 - 4 pm Panel: *Will Mass Immigration Kill the GOP?*  
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# Which Will It Be?

## **MICHAEL NEW WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS:**

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they have a legislature; they have a world court;  
in fact, they have everything they need for a world government  
except world taxes (they're working on that)  
and a world army—and that's what they want to make me."**

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# Best Behavior

Starting a new column, especially for the first issue of a new magazine, poses certain problems. It's like the first date with a girl you've had your eye on and pined for throughout those junior proms but never

had the courage to ask out. Mind you, in my case, it is more likely to be someone I noticed in an old folks home, as I'm on the wrong side of sixty.

As when out on a first date with one you've loved from afar, the thrill and fear are all consuming until—dare I say it?—boredom sets in or another sweet young thing comes into focus. It is now 32 years that I've been writing, having been given my start by William F. Buckley Jr. at *National Review*. I've been a columnist for the London *Spectator* for twenty-five years, along with columns in the London *Sunday Times*, *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, the *New York Post*, the *New York Press*. You name it, I've written for it, and every time the panic has been the same.

Still, I thought this one would be easier as I am part owner and co-editor, but actually it's much harder. Being on my best behavior makes me

very nervous. When anxious to impress, one tends to fumble. Starting anew makes one want to summarize, to reach some kind of conclusion, to say something grand. But saying something on a grand scale is what fools or pompous pundits usually do. As in falling in love, starting a column is being in its most vivid state, and as far as I'm concerned, nothing is more vivid than falling in love or starting a new column.

Although English was not my first or second language, I believe that good writing should include nuggets of good sense, eccentricity, and unrepentant prejudice—things which are as much fun to write as they are to read.

Here's one of the entries of this year's Bulwer-Lytton competition of purple prose, one I hope not to imitate or emulate: "The sun oozed over the horizon, shoved aside darkness, crept along the greensward, and, with sticky

fingers, pushed through the castle window, revealing the pillaged princess, hand at throat, crown asunder, gaping in frenzied horror at the sated, sodden amphibian lying beside her, disbelieving the magnitude of the frog's deception, screaming madly, "you lied, you lied!" When I read it I thought it was Alan Dershowitz, or John Podhoretz, but then I realized neither of them possess such talent to amuse.



Some years ago I reviewed Peter Brimelow's book *Alien Nation* very favorably. A review of my review by one New York hack was not so favorable.

"Taki is an immigrant himself and wants to shut the door once he and his buddy Brimelow are in," or words to that effect. Well, yes and no. Peter is a well-educated Brit who has added to the intellectual life of this nation. I am no egg-head, but I did fly over to these shores once my father had begun his shipping business over here, building his ships in Newport News, Virginia, employing American labor both in building and sailing his tankers. In fact, he built the largest American flagged vessel, *National Defender*, during the late Fifties, and had named one of his ships General Patton, after the greatest tank commander of World War II. We were hardly on welfare when we moved.

My take on immigration is simple: My main aim is to remind Americans that since we are a predominantly white society rooted in Christianity, our responsibility to immigrants is to bring them into our culture, not the other way around. If we have open bor-

BEING ON MY BEST BEHAVIOR MAKES ME VERY NERVOUS. WHEN ANXIOUS TO IMPRESS, **ONE TENDS TO FUMBLE**. STARTING ANEW MAKES ONE WANT TO SUMMARIZE, TO REACH **SOME KIND OF CONCLUSION**, TO SAY SOMETHING GRAND. BUT SAYING SOMETHING ON A GRAND SCALE IS WHAT FOOLS OR **POMPOUS PUNDITS** USUALLY DO. AS IN FALLING IN LOVE, STARTING A COLUMN IS BEING IN ITS MOST VIVID STATE, AND AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, NOTHING IS MORE VIVID THAN **FALLING IN LOVE** OR STARTING A NEW COLUMN.

ders we will be Brazil in no time, with most of Brazil's problems but without their genius for soccer. Be that as it may, every vibrant country such as the United States needs immigration, but it needs to be controlled.

Unlike Holland, for example. Here's a warning: An asylum seeker was recently warned that he would go to jail in Holland for having smelly feet. Teunis Teun fell foul of Dutch law after taking his shoes off in a public library in the University of Delft. The odor was so appalling that he was charged with a breach of the peace after refusing to put them back on. When he appeared in court in The Hague, he slipped off his shoes again, leaving the lawyers present gasping for breath. It was utterly unbearable, said an official, so bad that the court had to be cleared. The presiding judge was the first to flee the scene. Teun was fined 250 Euros (\$245)—a sum he was unable to come up with—and a two-year probation order was imposed. He was warned that if he ever took off his shoes again in public he would be sent to prison for six months. Teun, needless to say, lodged an appeal, although it had to be in writing as the court had emptied out. Now what I'd like to know is what happens to thieves and murderers in jail if and when Teun decides to flout the law and take his shoes off in public again. After all, even criminals have rights, and no one should have to inhale such appalling odors as those that emanate from Teunis Teun's feet. I wonder what the ACLU would do about such a case if Teunis decides to immigrate over here?

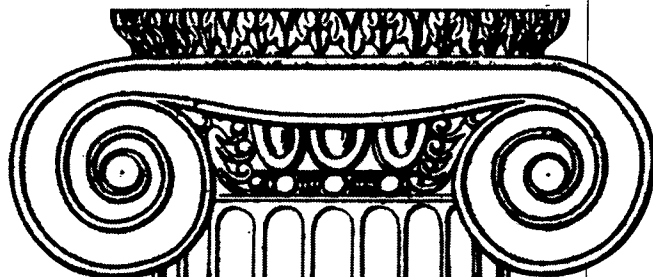
■

I think most of us have seen the movie "The Fountainhead," starring the great Gary Cooper, but how many of you know who John Galt is? Galt was the hero of Ayn Rand's second novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, which according to Gore Vidal is the one novel that everybody in the U.S. Congress has actually read. Rand was the radical capitalist who told us that that "One man's need is not another man's obligation." Among other things, she also said that "There are just three ways of getting money: earn it, steal it, or beg for it."

My father, a benevolent capitalist if there ever was one, was a great admirer of Rand's, although he never adhered to her maxims. (Whenever his workers pushed the envelope too far he would quote her *ad nauseam*, but that's about it).

Rand's philosophy was quite simple. There are no rights except life, liberty and property. Having crawled out of the Soviet Union in 1921 with \$300 in her pocket, she made it to New York alone, and the rest is history. She hardly spoke English upon arrival. Every form of taxation was theft, according to Ayn, something even my old man did not go along with. John Galt urges the talented and successful people in business, science and the arts to go on strike against the state, withholding their services from society, thus bringing about its collapse. A bit drastic, I agree, but food for thought.

The one of Rand's I liked the best was, "No man can ask another man's brain to do his thinking, any more than he can ask another man's lungs to do his breathing." More food for thought for Teddy Kennedy. ■



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During the 1980s, for example, the

Japanese Diet blocked the timely shipment of ceramics essential to the manufacture of U.S. cruise missiles. And earlier this year, the Dutch Government refused to cooperate with America's efforts to build diesel submarines for Taiwan.

Now, the Pentagon is about to embark on a major updating of U.S. forces, based on "next generation" technology and manufacturing processes. This equipment will be faster, lighter, more precise, and harder hitting.

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a reliable supply of the best technology and equipment, flowing directly into their hands from our own "arsenal of democracy"?

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What do you think?

***For want of a nail,  
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the horse was lost;  
For want of the horse,  
the rider was lost;  
For want of the rider,  
the battle was lost;  
For want of the battle,  
the kingdom was lost;  
And all for the want  
of a horseshoe nail.***

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